



## **Nevada Veterans Services Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** September 11, 2009  
Grant Sawyer Building  
555 E. Washington Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

### **Roll Call**

#### **Present:**

Senator Terry Care  
Bill Baumann  
Ronald Gutzman  
Gina Crown  
Sean Fellows  
Scott Smith

#### **Absent:**

Assemblywoman Kathy McClain  
Mike Musgrove

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

#### **Prayer**

### **Guest and Representative Introduction:**

Tim Tetz – Executive Director – Nevada Office of Veterans Services  
DeeDra Cornelius – Executive Assistant - Nevada Office of Veterans Services  
Eric Pike – Assistant Administrator – Nevada State Veterans Home  
Teresa Deeter – Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery  
Jerry Autrey – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander – American Legion  
Ryan Gould – Corporate Accounts Patient Advocate – Universal Solutions

### **Approval of this Meeting's Agenda:**

Scott Smith – Made a motion to accept the agenda with the amendment to reprint the correct agenda which should have been in the books  
Sean Fellows – Motion was seconded  
Decision: Unanimous consent

### **Approval of June 4, 2009 Minutes:**

Scott Smith – Made a motion to accept the minutes  
Bill Baumann – Motion was seconded  
Decision: Unanimous consent  
Changes Requested: None

## **NOVS Agency Reports:**

### **Fiscal Report:**

Report given by Tim Tetz for Joseph Palmer – Agency Financial Officer - Nevada Office of Veterans Services – Nevada State Veterans Home  
(All items and charts can be found in the Commission book)

### **Overview:**

1. Budget Account 2560:
  - a. FY09 was \$50,000 short in interment fees at the cemeteries.
  - b. In FY10 & FY11 interment fees are expected to be where they need to be.
  - c. The 3% charged for guardianships will disappear when the program is removed and no longer available to the budget.
  - d. At the start of FY10, the budget funds were insufficient by approximately \$20,000.
  - e. The Agency will have issues this year if it has to make more cuts.
2. Budget Account 2561:
  - a. In FY09 the Agency received an appropriation of 1.3 million dollars from the state to operate the Nevada State Veterans Home.
  - b. The budget account fell short on VA reimbursements and Medicaid collections.
  - c. The Home will revert approximately 30 million dollars.
  - d. In FY10 three new positions were added to the budget and the remainder of the account was mostly unchanged.
  - e. The Home will need to charge ancillary items as well as some services they haven't charged for before; therefore the Commission will discuss a fee/co pay increase at the next meeting.
3. Gift Account:
  - a. The veterans cemetery gift account started with \$166,200 and had \$82,700 at the end of the year.
  - b. The veterans cemetery gift account will be reimbursed by the VA by \$42,525.
  - c. The veteran gift account is having issues with receiving money from the tax deductions of vehicles and/or home tax exemption; a report will be submitted at the next meeting.
  - d. The Veterans Home gift account receives the first \$100,000 from the veterans license plate account each year.

**Guardianship Program Status Report:**

Report given by Tim Tetz for Denise Welch – Guardianship Program Manager

(All items and charts can be found in the Commission book)

**Overview:**

1. The Agency is currently managing assets for one living veteran left in the program.
2. The Agency is taking steps to finalize finances for two deceased veterans in the program.
3. The Agency is currently waiting on the court to absolve them from handling these cases, per the direction of the VA.

**Nevada State Veterans Home (NSVH) Administrator Report:**

Report given by Eric Pike – Nevada State Veterans Home Assistant Administrator

(All items and charts can be found in the Commission book)

**Overview:**

1. NSVH had its annual survey in May where two deficiencies were found out of a standard of eight nationwide; the deficiencies have since been taken care of.
2. The last Medicare ranking of NSVH was a perfect five stars all the way across the board.
3. NSVH is still dealing with the 70% or greater veteran disability issue.
4. NSVH's electronic medical records system is being changed and upgraded.
5. The Home is remodeling the Mariner neighborhood and is waiting on the final flooring to be installed.
6. All projects at NSVH are ongoing and no new projects are being started at this time.

**Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery Report:**

Report given by Tim Tetz for Wes Block – Cemetery Superintendent,

(All items and charts can be found in the Commission book)

**Overview:**

1. Commission members received a burial statistic report for the cemetery.
2. Only five single burial plots remain which are being kept available for oversized casket burials.
3. Expansion Project:
  - a. The Agency has requested money from the VA.
  - b. State Public Works Board must manage the project; however, the VA will not pay them to manage the project, therefore NOVS has asked them to defer the project, to which they have been refused.

4. Missing In America Project (MIAP)
  - a. With the help of Dorothy Minor, the American Legion Riders, and other veterans groups, the remains of five abandoned veterans were escorted from Elko to Fernley and buried at the cemetery on Friday, August 28, 2009.
  - b. Over two hundred people were in attendance for this ceremony.
  - c. The cemetery received an award for contributing to the advancement of the Missing in America Project.

### **Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery Report:**

Report given by Carole Turner – Deputy Executive Director

(All items and charts can be found in the Commission book)

#### **Overview:**

1. The cemetery' Superintendent position is currently open to applicants, preferably with knowledge of cemetery management.
2. Teresa Deeter was acknowledged along with cemetery staff for "stepping up to the plate" through the transition.
3. Commission members received a burial statistic report for the cemetery.
4. Maintenance Facility:
  - a. Has been in the process of construction for the last year.
  - b. Keys to the new maintenance building will officially be turned over on September 11, 2009 and a building dedication is scheduled for October 14, 2009 at 3:00 PM.
5. Administrative Building Expansion:
  - a. The project has been elevated from a category four to a category two.
  - b. The project has been expanded to include the following:
    - i. Access road improvements;
    - ii. A new main entryway; and
    - iii. Demolition of the existing maintenance building.
6. Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery Committee:
  - a. Jim McCawley was newly appointed to the committee; and
  - b. Robert Garlow, Steve Sanson, and Phil LaChapelle were all re-appointed to the committee.
  - c. The possibility of cemetery committee support for a mortuary within the city limits was brought to the Commission's attention:

- i. The Commission agreed this type of support may be beyond the scope of the cemetery committee and advised against it.
- ii. A motion for a letter to be created with the Commission's response was requested.

Sean Fellows – Made a motion to create a Commission response letter  
 Bill Baumann – Motion was seconded  
 Decision: Unanimous consent

- 7. Policies and procedures are being reviewed and updated at the cemetery.

### **Veterans Services Program Report:**

Report given by Tim Tetz for Jeanette Rae – Veterans Services Program Manager

(All items and charts can be found in the Commission book)

#### **Overview:**

- 1. Dan Manley, a Veterans Service Officer in the Las Vegas office, will be retiring in November of 2009 and the Agency will look at filling the position from inside.
- 4. Mobile Outreach Vehicle (MOV):
  - a. Outreach areas visited by the MOV during the summer:
    - i. Tonopah
    - ii. Fernley
    - iii. Fallon
    - iv. Gardnerville
    - v. Incline Village
    - vi. Ely
    - vii. Reno-Nevada State Fair
    - viii. Winnemucca
    - ix. Fallon – Fallon Naval Air Station Air Show
    - x. Reno – Reno Air Races
    - xi. Carson – National Guard retiree event
    - xii. Carson – Nevada Day Parade
  - b. It was reported the reception at these events was phenomenal, with many claims being taken and power of attorneys being completed.
  - c. Once finished in the Northern area the MOV will head to Southern Nevada.
- 5. VA has changed how they evaluate PTSD and may affect claims.
- 6. Exposure to Agent Orange has been linked to heart conditions and Parkinson's disease, which will affect claims.

**Executive Director Report:**

Report given by Tim Tetz – Executive Director

(All items and charts can be found in the Commission book)

**Overview:**

1. Public Relations:

a. Letters were sent to media with information and links to the Flickr account.

i. Photos have been taken and uploaded to the Flickr account of various events, outreaches, and the MOV.

ii. There are currently 746 pictures on the account and 650 individuals have viewed the account within the last 6 months.

b. Special Events:

i. The GWOT conference will be held on September 12, 2009.

ii. The Women Veterans Conference will be held March 27, 2010.

c. Announced the new NOVS website should be live and active by the end of October.

d. Legislation Symposium:

i. The last Legislative session went well for NOVS, achieving a 70% success rate.

ii. The Legislative Symposium will be held in March in conjunction with the Women Veterans Conference.

iii. Items the Agency agreed upon as important within NOVS:

1. The number one priority is the Northern Nevada State Veterans Home;

2. Completion of trinity teams and additional trinity teams;

3. Additional office space;

4. Additional staffing at the cemeteries;

5. Upgrades for employees working out of class;

6. Addition of Assistant Administrator position at NSVH;

7. The reorganization of the Veterans Service Commission structure;

8. Change in pay for unclassified employees;

9. Equipment recycling within the Agency;

10. Changes on how personnel handles hiring;

11. Possibly adding a pharmacist at NSVH;

12. Adding more video conferencing capability; and
  13. Planning for the development of fifty five acres in Boulder City.
- e. Late Breaking Issues & Reports:
    - i. Policy changes:
      1. The Flags, Flowers, and Decorations policy has been revised which will become effective September 1, 2009.
      2. A summarized version of the policy will be on signs posted at the cemeteries.
  - f. Personnel Survey:
    - i. The personnel survey is anonymous within the Agency.
    - ii. 63% of the Agency's employees participated in the survey this year, which was higher than last year's participation level.
    - iii. Even with the furlough and cemetery issues, the survey proved positive change experiences have gone up from last year.
  - g. Update on Grocery Bag Donation idea:
    - i. Letters are being created.
    - ii. Denise Welch in the NOVS office is working with Ms. Lengdorfer to move forward with the project.
    - iii. People will have the option to donate money to NOVS.
    - iv. Another update will be given to the Commission when more information is available.
  - h. University Veterans Coalition:
    - i. They are still looking for ways to raise money.
    - ii. Margaret Puccinelli and Tim Tetz are working toward Board of Regent buy-ins.
    - iii. Marta is trying to put together an expanded survey for this fall.
    - iv. The Agency will continue to work with them to find money for their program.

### **Deputy Executive Director Report:**

Report given by Tim Tetz for Carole Turner – Deputy Executive Director  
(All items and charts can be found in the Commission book)

### **Overview:**

1. The Women Veterans newsletter 3<sup>rd</sup> issue will be distributed in either January or February.
2. Hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Women Veterans Summit on March 23, 2010.

3. Carole Turner has been asked to co-sponsor a National Women Veterans Conference, which is tentatively planned to be held in 2011, in Phoenix, AZ.
4. Involved with OEF/OIF veterans and the GWOT conference coming up.
5. Actively involved with outreach to homeless veterans.
6. Actively involved with outreach to senior veterans.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

##### **Nevada State Veterans Home – Sparks**

###### **Overview:**

1. The Agency continues to work on receiving state funding for the new Home.
2. The Agency needs to come up with 35%; however, the money could also come from fund raisers or donations, not just the state.
3. As of now there is no money left for capital improvement projects.
4. Other homes are using the principals, but are not true Green House projects.

#### **Public Comment:**

##### **Ryan Gould – Corporate Accounts Patient Advocate – Universal Solutions**

###### **Overview:**

1. Universal Solutions is a Patient medical billing advocacy company.
2. This company was established in 2008
3. Currently serving 2700 + members in 38 states
4. Saved on average \$1100 per member
5. Approximately 90% of all medical claims go out with at least 1 error; of those claims only about 15% are ever fully corrected.
6. Patients account for paying nearly \$35 billion annually which they should not be liable for.
7. As much as \$226 billion is billed fraudulently by healthcare providers annually directly and indirectly.
8. This company is a liaison between clients and healthcare providers to make sure clients are only paying for what they should be liable for.
9. They regularly report on activities to all of their members.
10. The company provides members and their families with timely answers to all of their healthcare related questions through unlimited phone, internet, e-mail support, and in-service visits for those who are local.



11. Marketing has been mostly through word of mouth.
12. The cost is a flat rate of \$25 per month.
13. They can be contacted by their toll free number 800-391-2140 or via e-mail at [support@usbyscm.com](mailto:support@usbyscm.com).

## **Other Reports:**

### **American Legion (ALG) Update**

Report given by Ron Gutzman

#### **Overview:**

1. The American Legion representative expressed concern about what is going to happen to VA healthcare even though the President said the VA system will not be changed.
2. Medicare is another concern for the American Legion; it will only pay for health care in civilian hospitals and will not pay for healthcare provided by the VA.
3. American Legion members attended the Missing in America Project event in Fernley, NV.
4. The American Legion will support the Nevada Day Parade in Carson City, NV.
5. The Veterans Health fair was not attended; however, Ron Gutzman spoke with the people who put it on and they expressed to him their happiness with the success of the program.

### **Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Update**

Report given by Bill Baumann

#### **Overview:**

1. The DAV is also concerned with VA healthcare and Medicare issues.
2. Announced Bill Anton was placed into the Ranger Hall of Fame.
3. The wheelchair program has expanded; they are now in Reno and Carson City, NV, Alaska, New Jersey, Colorado, and Arkansas

### **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Update**

Report given by Mike Musgrove

#### **Overview:**

1. Mike Musgrove was not in attendance at this meeting and was therefore unable to provide a report at this time.

## **Open Commission Discussion**

### **Overview:**

1. The Commission would like to recognize Margaret Puccinelli at the next Veterans Service Commission meeting in December and the Women Veterans Conference in March.
2. Applications are being submitted and forwarded to the Governor's office for final decisions; any possible recommendations from the Commission were asked to apply.
3. May have Commission member replacement by the next meeting in December.

## **New Business**

1. Veterans Benefit Healthcare and Information Technology Act:
  - a. Veterans taken in at 70%, 80%, and 90% are covered at the OMB Circular rate or the Medicaid rate, whichever is less.
  - b. With this law NSVH automatically loses \$70 per day for each of these veterans.
  - c. NSVH also loses the ability to collect the additional \$72 per day for the VA per diem even though they are a veteran, because the \$250 is supposed to be all inclusive.
  - d. Due to this law NSVH must pay for all of the care and all of the costs above and beyond, which includes doctor visits, medication, and other items.
  - e. NSVH is unable to accept 70% or higher veterans due to the lack of incoming money needed to care for them.
  - f. To truly care for Nevada's veterans this law must change.
  - g. 100% veterans are covered under a different rule.

## **Future Agenda Items**

1. Election of new chair and vice chair;
2. Recognizing Margaret Puccinelli;
3. Report on veteran tax issue
4. Update on Grocery Bag Donation idea
5. Salt Lake City Report
6. VA Report
7. National VA healthcare issue update

## **Future Meetings**

### **Upcoming Commission Meetings:**

1. **Veterans Service Commission Meeting**  
December 10, 2009 – Elko, NV  
(This meeting has been changed to December 18, 2009)
2. **Veterans Service Commission Meeting**  
March 26, 2009 – Mesquite, NV
3. **Veterans Service Commission Meeting**  
June ??, 2009 – Las Vegas, NV

## **Adjournment**

Senator Terry Care – Adjourned the meeting